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SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT PASS USAID TO LAC/RSD, LAC/SAM, G/ENV, PPC/ENV  
TREASURY FOR USED IBRD AND IDB AND INTL/MDB  
USDA FOR FOREST SERVICE: LIZ MAHEW  
INTERIOR FOR DIR INT AFFAIRS: K WASHBURN  
INTERIOR FOR FWS: TOM RILEY  
INTERIOR PASS USGS FOR INTERNATIONAL: J WEAVER  
JUSTICE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES: JWEBB  
EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL: CAM HILL-MACON  
USDA FOR ARS/INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH: G FLANLEY  
NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL: HAROLD STOLBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [XR](#) [BR](#)  
SUBJECT: SOUTH AMERICA ESTH NEWS, NUMBER 77

1. The following is the seventy-seventh in a series of newsletters, published by the Brasilia Regional Environmental Hub, covering environment, science and technology, and health news in South America. The information below was gathered from news sources from across the region, and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Hub office or our constituent posts. Addressees who would like to receive a user-friendly email version of this newsletter should contact Larissa Stoner at stonerla@state.gov. The e-mail version also contains a calendar of upcoming ESTH events in the region.

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## Agriculture

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### [13. Newcastle Disease Found In Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil](#)

JULY 07, 2006 - The World Organization For Animal Health, or OIE, [announced] that a case of Newcastle disease was found on a private property in Rio Grande do Sul, one of Brazil's most important chicken producing states. [L]aboratory tests begun in early May on chickens in the town of Vale Real in Rio Grande do Sul discovered the virus that causes the disease in one bird. Forty-four chickens were slaughtered as a result. The discovery was made during the state's standard animal health monitoring operations, the newswire reported, citing Agriculture Ministry representative in Rio Grande do Sul, Francisco Signor.

### [14. Transgenic Food Label Law Passed by Chile's Chamber of Deputies](#)

JUNE 26, 2006 - The [Chilean] Chamber of Deputies approved on June 21 a law mandating the labeling of transgenic food sold in Chile. The legislation, which will be voted upon in the Senate the first week in July, passed with 99 votes in favor, one vote against, and one abstention. This proposed legislation stipulates the labeling of food products which are made of at least one percent transgenic corn or soy bean. Every day staples such as cookies, pastries, bread, drinks, hot dogs, sausages, olives, and butter would be put under the provision of this new law. The Deputies' vote reflects public opinion in Santiago. According to a 2005 study in the greater Santiago area, 95.5 percent of all citizens want to see genetically modified foods clearly labeled, while 58.5 percent said that they would not eat it at all.

Source - Santiago Times (no link)

### [15. Brazil Promoting Organic Products](#)

JUNE 24, 2006 - A national campaign to promote organic products began June 23 in Brazil, where at least 20,000 farmers, mostly running small operations, are dedicated to growing agrochemical-free crops on a total of 6.5 million hectares. The initiative, lasting through the end of the month, is headed by four government ministries, the Brazilian supermarket association ABRAS, and farmer and consumer organizations. Organic farming moves an estimated 100 million dollars a year in the country, and is growing at a pace of about 50 percent annually -- more than twice the world average. The

campaign includes seminars, demonstrations, food fairs and the distribution of information through a wide variety of activities.

Source - Terramerica

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Water Issues  
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#### [16. Colombian Communities Resist River-Diversion Plan](#)

JUNE 2006 - Nine years after being rebuffed in its first attempt, Colombia's Energy Company of the Pacific (Epsa) is trying again to

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persuade Afro-Colombian and Nasa Indian communities in the department of Cauca to allow it to divert the Ovejas River through a tunnel to the Salvajina hydropower complex. But the project, which would boost energy output by 15% at the 285-megawatt Salvajina station, has rekindled opposition in the communities, which say the diversion would destroy the livelihoods of hundreds of people who rely on the river for fishing, farming and mining. Community leaders allege Epsa is misrepresenting river-diversion impacts as it pushes for local approval of the USD15-20 million project in a constitutionally-required public consultation later this year. They also claim the government has yet to fulfill its promise to compensate 6,000 people who lost their homes and livelihoods when the Salvajina dam was built on the Cauca River in 1984.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

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Fishing & Marine Conservation  
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#### [17. Chile's Artisan Fishermen Look to Save Trade from Global Warming and Overfishing](#)

JULY 7, 2006 - In the past few years artisan fishermen from Bahia Mansa and neighboring communities have started to question the future of their trade. Catches of nearly every major commercial species are lower than they were five years ago. Quality, too, claim the fishermen, has declined. The cause for the diminished catch is most likely a combination of factors. Rising acidity in the ocean, an effect of the global buildup of greenhouse gasses, is a threat to marine populations everywhere. Currents, too, have shifted, a consequence of major temperature fluctuations on the ocean's surface, phenomena commonly known as La Nia and El Nio. To date, however, no studies have measured the effects of these factors locally. But what can be measured and controlled on Osorno's coast are direct human actions. Many in Bahia Mansa are quick to mention the impact of large-scale commercial vessels that operate farther offshore, scraping the seabed with their wide, hook-laden nets. Fearing further losses, members of CPALO last week formalized an agreement with the University of Los Lagos' Aquaculture Department to help repopulate Osorno's waters. In addition to the fishermen promising to self-regulate better, the venture calls for a new hatchery at Bahia Mansa, based at the University's Metri Center outside of Puerto Montt. The new facility will be staffed by Aquaculture Department faculty and students, with priority given to students from or with family still living on Osorno's coast.

Source - Santiago Times (no link)

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Protected Areas  
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#### [18. Galapagos National Park \(At Last\) Gets New Director](#)

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JUNE 2006 - The new director of Ecuador's Galapagos National Park has no shortage of early challenges, a crucial one being to find alternative sources of income for artisanal fishermen, who experts believe are placing a major strain on the archipelago's marine life. Raquel Molina Moreira, a 40-year-old biologist who took office last month, is expected to consider solutions such as allowing paying tourists to accompany and assist local fishermen. The extra income, supporters of the idea say, would ease economic pressures on fishermen-and, thus, on the archipelago's fishery. Molina, to be sure, has set other priorities as well, among them strengthening park operations. That task will be aided by a USD150,000 grant from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The funds are earmarked for goals including renovation of the park's organizational structure and implementation of ISO 14,000 and ISO 18,000 environmental-management standards. The new director also plans to bolster training of park personnel and expansion of the number of park guards, which now number around 280.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

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CDM and M2M  
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#### 19. Brazil a Regional Leader in CDM Projects

JUNE 2006 - Brazilian projects loom large in the early stages of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the Kyoto Protocol program aimed at promoting greenhouse-gas reductions in developing countries. As of late May, Brazil ranked second only to India in the number of projects in the various stages of the CDM approval process, with 145. Among the first five in the world to earn these credits is a Brazilian project under which methane from decomposing garbage at the city of Salvador's sole landfill is being captured and flared. Operated by Bahia Treatment and Residue Transfer (Battre), a private company that runs the landfill, the project reflects the popularity of methane-capture as a means of generating gas-reduction credits. Another CDM-registered project called Novagerar, in the town of Nova Iguagu, which is on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, also captures landfill methane. But instead of flaring the gas, Novagerar uses it to fuel an evaporation system that reduces the landfill's leachate, which prevents contaminants from entering the water table.

Source - EcoAmericas (Please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

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Industrialization & Pollution  
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#### 10. Colombian Port Plans Rile Traditional Communities

JUNE 2006 - Colombia is planning to build a series of large pipeline, road, and port projects over the next decade to open its

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vast Pacific coast to development and trade. But local communities, fearing injury to their traditions and environment, are mobilizing to oppose the effort. As an economic alternative, these communities have been establishing ecotourism businesses, sustainable forestry operations and other environmentally friendly initiatives that they hope will give them financial and cultural independence. The government's highest-priority initiatives, spelled out in a 2005 document by the intra-ministerial National Council for Economic and Social Policy, are the construction of a USD400-million port in the Bay of Malaga within five years and of a USD750-million port in the Gulf of Tribuga within a decade. The plans also include construction of a 620-mile (1,000-km) oil pipeline from the Gulf of Maracaibo in northern Venezuela to the port earmarked for the Gulf of Tribuga.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

#### 11. Peru: Activists Want Independent Authority to Monitor Doe Run's

## Activities

JUNE 2006 - Following a government decision to give Doe Run Peru more time to rein in pollution caused by its smelter in La Oroya, a network of Peruvian civic and environmental groups is calling for an independent environmental authority to step in. The Muqui Network, comprising some 20 environmental, human rights, church and social-action groups concerned about mining's community impacts, wants greater attention paid to health problems in La Oroya. It advocates the creation of an "independent, autonomous environmental authority that acts with transparency and seriousness, and that has the necessary powers." Prompting the network's call was a May 29 decision by the Energy and Mines Ministry that gives Missouri-based Doe Run's Peruvian subsidiary until Sept. 2008 to install equipment to capture sulfur dioxide emissions from the plant's lead operation. The ministry also extended until Oct. 2009 the period within which Doe Run Peru must install such equipment for its copper operation.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

### 12. Brazil Targeting Industrial Air Emissions

JUNE 2006 - Brazilian regulators have stepped up their fight against industrial air pollution. The National Environmental Council (Conama) recently drafted the country's first nationwide air-emissions limits for industry and is expected to approve them in July for immediate implementation. Meanwhile, the heavily industrial state of Sao Paulo has set up its first-ever emissions trading program. Both measures target new industrial facilities and thus are not expected to bring across-the-board reductions in industrial air contamination. But experts say they mark a serious attempt to control industrial air pollution at the state and national levels.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

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### 13. Chile: Greenpeace Blockades Celco Cellulose Plant

JUNE 23, 2006 - Greenpeace activists blockaded the entrance to a Celulosa Arauco and Constitucion (Celco) plant in Ranquil on June 21, denouncing the company's record of toxic waste dumping. Six activists dropped a banner from atop a 100-meter boiler that read "Enough contamination!" while another fourteen chained themselves to a truck carrying the same slogan. This latest chapter of the environmental showdown against Celco began June 17 when concerned farmers, citizens and activists staged a march near the "Nueva Aldea" complex, located in region VIII in Southern Chile in Ranquil. Protestors fear that chemical waste dumping from cellulose production will contaminate the Itata River. Though the plant has received government permission to begin, activists are calling for a number of changes to reduce the potential impact of water contamination. Their demands include a promise that organic chlorine waste will not be dumped into the river and investment in chlorine-free bleaching technology. Greenpeace issued its demands in a report that also attacks the practices of Celco's Alto Parana plant in Argentina.

Source - Santiago Times (no link)

### 14. Pascua Lama Approved by Chilean Environmental Authorities

JUNE 14, 2006 - Chilean environmental authorities have approved Barrick Gold's proposed USD 1.5 billion gold project in the Andes mountains notwithstanding the opposition of environmental groups concerned about water pollution and other contamination issues. The proposed mine straddles the Chile/Argentina border, and a final decision from Argentine environmental authorities is pending. Experts say that preliminary work at Pascua Lama has already revealed the kinds of problems that can be expected in the future. Initial road development has led to sediment filtering into shallow, underground waterways, compromising the water's cleanliness. A recent report produced by the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Program at the Universidad de Diego Portales (Desc-UDP), warned against Pascua Lama's "devastating" consequences to community water rights and the indigenous farmers in the area whose livelihoods depend on the glacial waters. Barrick, the world's largest mining company, plans to begin building the mine this September, and to start producing by 2009. The Pascua-Lama project has reserves of 17.6 million ounces of gold.

Source - MercoPress

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Energy  
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#### 15. U.S. Lawmakers Push Sugar as Fuel Source

JUNE 19, 2006 - With the market for corn-based ethanol booming, lawmakers from sugar-producing states are hoping that beet and cane growers can soon jump onto the renewable fuel bandwagon. They cite

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the model of Brazil, which produces ethanol made from sugar cane. But critics, pointing out that sugar is much cheaper in Brazil than in the United States, question whether the economics of sugar-based ethanol would work in America. Jack Roney, an economist with the American Sugar Alliance, agreed that the government would need to step in to stimulate a sugar-to-ethanol industry. "It would take a combination of consumption mandates to ensure that the demand would be there, and conceivably some production incentives to use sugar ethanol," he said. "The way that the Brazilians established their program is through 30 years of government intervention in energy and agriculture markets, to ensure there would be adequate demand and supplies."

Source - NYT

#### 16. An Energy Field of Dreams

JUNE 17, 2006 - "Be like Brazil" have never been words to live by except perhaps in soccer or samba. But suddenly Americans are being told we should imitate Brazil in its expensive devotion to driving cars that run on ethanol. VeraSun Energy, the second-largest U.S. ethanol producer, was the talk of Wall Street. Wal-Mart wants to install pumps to cater to cars that run on a largely ethanol blend. Even Rudy Giuliani was plumping for the stuff, a sign that an Iowa campaign stop may be in his future. We'd say the world had gone mad, except that this is a fairly typical case study in how political meddling distorts energy markets. Weary of high gas prices, drivers can be forgiven for desiring a "miracle" fuel that is allegedly cheap and clean. The most widely cited research on this subject comes from Cornell's David Pimental and Berkeley's Ted Patzek. They've found that it takes more than a gallon of fossil fuel to make one gallon of ethanol -- 29 percent more. That's because it takes enormous amounts of fossil-fuel energy to grow corn (using fertilizer and irrigation), to transport the crops and then to turn that corn into ethanol.

Source - Wall Street Journal

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General  
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#### 17. Environment Was Non-Issue in Peru's Presidential Race

JUNE 2006 - In a country where community groups have blocked mining and oil-drilling projects and a metals smelter has left local children with high blood lead levels, one might expect the environment to get air-time during a presidential campaign. Not so in Peru, where green issues received scant attention in the presidential race won June 4 by former President Alan Garcia. The environment did not figure in campaign platforms, was glossed over in press conferences and drew not a single mention in the lone presidential debate. Garcia, who takes office on July 28, has hinted about his stances on certain issues. Meeting foreign reporters this month, he said foreign companies operating in Peru



must meet the standards that apply in their home countries. Garcia

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was less emphatic about reinforcing Peru's top environmental agency, the National Environment Council (Conam). The head of Conam reports to the office of the Cabinet chief, but does not have a seat in the Cabinet.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

#### 18. Argentina Names Lawyer as Top Environment Official

JUNE 27, 2006 - President Nestor Kirchner named a lawyer who has led Argentina's legal battle against a pulp mill project in neighboring Uruguay as the country's top environmental official. Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez announced the appointment of Romina Picolotti, a recent winner of a leading environmental prize (Sophie Prize) for her work throughout Latin America to halt environmental degradation. Picolotti, 35, recently formed part of an Argentine legal team challenging the construction of two giant pulp mills on the Uruguay river bordering both countries.

Source - Reuters News. Article kindly shared by US Embassy Buenos Aires

#### 19. Brazilian Supreme Court Appoints Environmental Advocate

JUNE 29, 2006 - Antonio Herman Benjamin, founder of the Brazilian NGO Instituto O Direito por Um Planeta Verde and Co-chair of INECE\*'s Executive Planning Committee, has been appointed by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to become a Justice on the Supreme Federal Court of Brazil. Mr. Benjamin teaches Environmental Law and Products Liability in both Brazil and the United States; founded and serves as Coeditor-In-Chief of the Brazilian Environmental Law Journal, the only regular environmental law review in Latin America; and has drafted or co-drafted several Brazilian laws, including the 1998 Crimes against the Environment Act, the Forest Code, and the Anti-Corruption Act.

\* International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement

#### Update on Avian Influenza

#### 20. Avian Influenza Knowledge Now (KN): A Web-based Tool for Avian Influenza Collaboration and Information Management

The USAID Avian and Human Influenza Response Unit is sponsoring the development of Avian Influenza Knowledge Now (AIKN), an internet portal designed to facilitate interagency information flows, reduce dependence on strained email systems, and increase access to key documents related to USG international response efforts. AIKN will be managed and hosted by USAID's AI Unit in coordination with the State Department's Avian Influenza Action Group (G/AIAG), USAID regional bureaus in Washington, and field staff around the world,

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and will be open to participation by other USG agencies and colleagues involved in the international response. The launch of the site is anticipated in August, 2006.

WILLIAMSON